

Shelters Experiencing Increased Demand Since Oil Disaster Began
July 20, 2010

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) worked to help victims of domestic violence by requesting emergency federal funding for prevention programs serving south Louisiana. The Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence requested Congressman Melancon's assistance in securing additional federal funding to support the increased demand for services since the Gulf oil disaster began in April. The Coalition is reporting an increase in calls to crisis hotlines, shelters that are at or near capacity, and domestic violence victims showing up at oil disaster drop-in centers in search of help.

In a letter to the U.S. Justice Department and the Department of Health and Human Services, Congressman Melancon wrote, **"I am writing to you today to request your Department's help in securing available emergency funding for domestic violence prevention programs serving Southern Louisiana. As we are soon to enter the fourth month of the Deepwater Horizon oil leak, it has come to my attention that domestic violence prevention organizations are seeing an increase in domestic violence cases."**

Congressman Melancon continued, **"For the sake of the thousands of woman and children who rely on these services, it is imperative that emergency funding be made available to these organizations which are battling this crisis every day."**

He concluded, **"Although many non-profit agencies are doing all that they can to address the growing problem, these organizations desperately need additional funding to meet the increased demand and stop the cycle of domestic violence."**

Congressman Melancon also included with his letter an update from the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, outlining many of the issues facing domestic violence prevention programs in the region. In addition to an increase in domestic violence incidents, the Coalition reports that service providers are being strained by a severe decrease in their funding. According to the Coalition, donations from individuals, companies, and nonprofit organizations like the United Way have steeply declined. This drop in funding has forced support programs to undergo several rounds of cuts to their budgets and the services they provide, with more cuts expected in the near future.

In their request to Congressman Melancon, the Coalition reported, **"The combination of an increase in requests for service and already tenuous economic conditions has created an absolutely devastating effect on domestic violence service providers in Louisiana. The southern agencies especially can tie as much as 50 – 70% of their resources, in some cases more, directly to oil and fishing industries and they are losing dollars in large amounts daily."**

"Agency budgets vary from small to large but average about \$600,000 - \$700,000. At these rates the agencies would cumulatively need an immediate cash infusion of at least \$5 million to maintain current service levels."

[Click here](#) to read Congressman Melancon's letter requesting additional funding for domestic violence prevention organizations in Louisiana.

Congressman Melancon represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

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